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The Noiseless Spider

a literary magazine



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THE NOISELESS SPIDER

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Statement of Editorial Policy

The editorial board of *The Noiseless Spider* agrees with Henry Miller that the pangs of birth relate not to the body but to the spirit. It was demanded of us to know love, experience union and communion, and thus achieve liberation from the wheel of life and death. But we have chosen to remain this side of Paradise and to create through art the illusory substance of our dreams. In a profound sense we are forever delaying the act. We flirt with destiny and lull ourselves to sleep with myth. We die in the throes of our own tragic legends, like spiders caught in our own web.

Letter from the Editor

Dear Friends and Readers;

We, the English Club, need your help!

We need your feedback, letters of appraisal and/or criticism. Tell us what you like or dislike, why? and how we can improve.

Readers and Friends, remember: this is your magazine, for your enjoyment, so please give us some positive, constructive criticisms.

Thank you,
Felipe Sanchez
Editor

Write: University of New Haven
Huragari Hall
300 Orange Avenue
West Haven, CT 06516
Att: The English Club

P.S. (THANK YOU; and again thank you; submitters and TEC staff.)

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Grandpa

*Walking through the park
I saw him.
He was staring at me,
but his eyes held no life.
He sat on the bench
unaware of the brilliant colors
of the foliage surrounding him.
He didn't look up when the sun began to splash
orange rays across the sky as it began its descent.
He held on tightly to the cane
that was artistically painted
a bright shade of red on the end.
But he never saw it.
All he ever saw were the horns honking
and the kids yelling.
He never saw me.*

— Cindy Bellin

Genesis—The Unauthorized Version

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth in six days and rested on the seventh. Then, on the eighth day, he saw that he had only started the job and thus decided to create the Engineer.

Then the Engineer said, "Let there be light!" and there was electric light, and he saw that it was good. But then he created power companies to power the lights, and his reward was to listen to the people howl for lower rates, to listen to a howl untempered by thoughts of maintenance, fuel costs, or plant depreciation.

And the Engineer said, "Let there be Sight and Sound!" and lo, there were movies and television. The people saw that this was good and immediately proceeded to make films portraying the Engineer and his brother, the Scientist, as raving mad world-conquerers and builders of monsters.

Now there came a time when war and rumors of war troubled the land. The Engineer heeded this and erected mighty defenses. He caused submarines to prowl the deeps and jet planes to span the sky, ceaselessly guarding against the savages without. The intellectuals, seeing that their freedom of speech was assured, cursed the Engineer for starving the poor and endangering world peace.

The Engineer was a rather patient soul who tried to overlook such slights. He continued to work, toiling long hours over intricate geometries and exotic metals in order to build a source of power for the future. His reward this time was Jane Fonda, "The China Syndrome", and Three Mile Island, the first disaster in history without casualties. He filled the streets with automobiles, cheap enough for anyone to own. "Rape of the environment!" sneered the intellectuals as they drove to their poetry readings. One invention after another was introduced, only to be rapidly identified as a threat to the survival of the human race.

The Engineer finally became a little annoyed. He went to the intelligentisia and tried to plead his case. Unfortunately they refused to listen and said to him: "What could an engineer, grubbing amidst his vulgar machinery, have to say? We are the true servants of the Muses and have no time for grease monkeys! Excuse us, for we must resume our inspired activities."

The Engineer lost his temper. And he sent down word to his trusted servant, H. G. Rickover: "Now Hymie, first I want you to build an Ark...."

— Boris A. Chernick

*Irving Grapefruit, green and bright,
Trembling in the lobby light,
You are such an awful sight,
Standing there, shaking with fright.*

*Cigarette butts and gooey gum,
A cigar from some old bum,
Crushed wrappers and rubber bands,
Paper clips and soda cans
Decorate your earthen bin
And cover all your limbs.
Someone ought to hang a sign,
"Dump your trash. There is no fine."*

*"Water! Water! is **all!**," you cry
To everyone that passes by.
But all you ever seem to get
Is everything but water wet.*

— Bernadette Grieb

*I care not for roses.
They remind me of me:
Their petals tightly closed
So no one will see
What secret they hide from view.*

*I beg the petals
Not to open,
Not to part,
Revealing their inner heart.
But instead they speed,
Exposing their seed
To wind and rain.*

*How foolish
They seem to me,
For in the end
They stand a stem
Whose petals
Have fallen once again.*

— Bernadette Grieb

*I remember
A spring day
Somewhere in May,
When tiny leaves
Floated in the breeze,
And tulips resurrected,
As thawed ponds reflected
Images of the new life.
I sat that day
On a cement stairway,
My mind pondering,
My thoughts wondering,
When my eyes came to rest
On a field of green ivy.*

*Their meshed vines,
Tangled in erratic lines,
Smothered and choked,
Concealed and cloaked
The ground —
Everything around,
Except a small illusion
That stood in confusion.
A green mentor
Positioned dead center
Protruded above the sea
Of green ivy.
Frail twigs grew
With leaves anew.
It rose tall and free,
This little oak tree,
Determined to overcome
The mangled vines
Traveling in twisted lines.*

*How courageous,
I thought,
Not to be caught
In the strangulation
Threatening eradication:
Not to conform
But to reform;
Not to falter
But to alter
Direction,
And rise above
The common vines
Traveling in twisted lines.*

*Then time slipped away
From that lovely day.
It silently passed
Through an hour glass.
The days became years.
My youth disappeared.
But I always remembered,
Even deep in December,
That day,
The breeze,
And an oak tree
Growing in ivy leaves.*

— Bernadette Grieb

The King Atop The Hill

*All children come out of a war
battered, bruised and burned;
they say it's getting better,
though the tables have not turned.*

*Neighbors, friends, what are they now?
These words come from the past.
It frightens me to even think
our bonds might never last.*

*Where can we run as times grow grey?
There's nowhere we can turn,
We sit and watch, our heads held low;
our lives begin to burn.*

*They see the loss of countless lives
on all the lands we comb;
no longer are they boys but men,
as they come marching home.*

*Home again to start anew.
Their lives have all been set.
The blood, the tears, the loss, the pain.
they try to just forget.*

*To see them once again as small
no worries of their own,
to love, befriend, to be at peace,
back to what they've known:*

*A life of joy, of dance and song
when war was just a game,
to be the king atop the hill,
pretending all was fame.*

*To be the king atop that hill:
I say it once again.
Perhaps they never marched as boys,
but always marched as men.*

*Whate'er the case in point may be
the day is sure to come:
no more fights of what is whose;
all will have gone home.*

*And on that day, I am sure
the bells will all be ringing;
then and only then, my friend,
the time will come for singing.*

— Holly A. Grammatico



— Allan Channels

The Ultimate

While the sense of the Word is unknown,
Major facts may withal be defined,
Such as why and wherefore people groan
Or rejoice at the living they find.

Some would say each propensity stems
From a bent, or genetic device
That the way each one praises-condemns
Is intrinsic, not naughty nor nice.

But a contrary view is my thought!
That adapting to life is the mold;
All the ways that we shouldn't or ought
Draw meaning from what we are told;

Our responses to external force,
Which we favor or battle against,
Are the causes that shape us perforce
And fix in our natures, condensed.

It is physics and ratios which rule;
What perceives and reacts modifies.
The result is the creature and tool
Which accepts daily life, or denies.

None are made from the gene or the right,
In their innermost self, but, instead,
Are the product defined by the light
Of experience, and that till they're dead.

So I long for the charm and the dream,
For the sweet, and the gracious milieu
So that most, if not all, will esteem
What is good, and be decent folk, too.

— Jason Hunt

The Lizard King

*Slithering on the desert's ground,
I perched myself atop a mound,
My head held high as if a king.
I felt I could do anything!
I came upon a crystal pool.
If I drank, I'd break the desert's rule,
For often water of this kind,
Is not a very joyous find.
My thirst was great, but it was too late —
I had taken a drink.
I knew what I had done was wrong —
My life forfeited before long.
So now my body withers in the sun.
I can't believe what I have done.*

— J. Jay Guidone

A Poetic Point of View

*Speak to me, poetically, of life and love and things to come,
And I will forever by thy center,
Thy formal core,
From which I shall grow into the soul of your existence.*

*For you and I will be but one,
A central bond, a central force.
An informal "meeting of the minds" will be the elasticity
That keeps our boundaries intact
Yet forever limitless
In love of life.*

*But be not scientific, my love,
For thou shalt lose me to a more Poetic Source,
That kindles the flame of my excitement
For the poetry beneath the perplexity of our world
Yet undiscovered and, gladly so.*

— Adria DiBenedetto

“Twelve-miles Outside of Lerwick”

Packed with borrowed tent, a sack of carrots and bananas, shabby fiddle, and a roll of toilet paper, I set out of town on foot to see the Shetland countryside. It did not seem beyond my capabilities as a young independent woman to spend some time on the road alone with just a few essentials. My Shetland friends pretended to support my idea. But I knew that they really did not understand my desire to see Shetland by foot. They made mention of the buses which I could take that ran regularly to all areas of the mainland. They said that it was too cold still to sleep outside. My mind was made up to go, and nothing would change it.

It was mid-February. I had been living in Lerwick, the capital of the Shetland Islands, for one month now. I needed a breath from the smoke-filled, buzzing pubs which were the heart-beat of the town during the winter months. The music, spirits and company in these places made the long dark days of winter more bearable for the Shetlanders. I needed a rest from the draining situation of having to give an extensive autobiography to everyone new whom I met. I needed an escape from this exuberant social climate.

The Shetland Islands lie two hundred and fifty miles off the coast of Aberdeen, Scotland, in the North Sea. Shetland consists of some one hundred separate islands, of which only seventeen are inhabited. The Gulf Stream current circling the islands provides a mild winter climate with little snow accumulation and an average temperature of fifty degrees. The winds, though, are impetuous and strong; sometimes you could be blown away if you did not hug a firmly rooted object.

I was going to hike the seventy-two mile length of land from Lerwick, the mainland, to Unst, a separate island marking the northernmost point in the Shetlands, to see whatever there was to see and to be alone with my thoughts. Perhaps, I could begin to appreciate all that I had experienced during the past month in Shetland. This was my first journey abroad. Meeting so many people and getting accustomed to a new culture was exhausting.

The first hill on A970, the route which I would follow the entire way, lay not a quarter of a mile outside the town. The steepness of the hill used up much of the energy I had started out with. My legs began to turn to rubber. Finally, at the top of the rise, I had to stop and take a deep breath to steady them. Sweat

soaked my shirt. I rested for a few minutes, regained some energy, adjusted my back-pack, and continued to walk.

Some miles out of town I passed through a cluster of croft-houses; the Shetland name for farm is "croft". The small stucco houses were scattered on the landscape. Older croft-houses made from stone, dotted the low-lying peat hills. These dated from the Viking days and were left abandoned long ago to crumble where they stood. In this village an old man and old woman were standing in a garden next to their house. They stared at me as I passed by them. I did not have the energy to socialize, nor any interest in socializing, so I just waved and walked on. I was content to follow the road and take in all that was around me. Listening hard to the wind blowing in from the North Sea, I could sometimes hear voices speaking words encouraging me along. The sheep on the peat hills would "bah" and "bleep" and seemed to be laughing at me for walking alone. These sounds filled the gaps between my thoughts and the sights. Never before had I seen such an open landscape where you could see endlessly in every direction. Walking alone I no longer felt isolated from the Creator, as I had when I was spending so much time in the pubs. It felt good to be out and alone.

The landscape was predictable along A970. Glimpses of the North Sea inlets lay to the right of the road. Brown peat hills made up the prevalent inland terrain. Sheep wandered freely along the roadside. Sometimes they would lie on the road and refuse to move when a car approached. They took to the hoof frantically at my advance and then would look at me with bewildered stares. Except for the sheep and infrequently passing buses, the road was mine.

Further along the road a car stopped next to me. A Mercedes Benz. The driver was an Englishman heading north towards the oil terminal at Sullon Voe.

"Hop in," said the Englishman.

"No, thanks, I'm walking," I replied.

"Fine," he said, rolling up the car window and speeding away. Taking a ride would have defeated my purpose. I wanted to be out in the elements.

At the oil terminal lying at the northwest corner of the mainland, oil drills stood like giant water spiders out in the sea, sucking up the rich black nectar from its core. Nearby was a prefabricated city within a large "high-security" area. At night this eerily illuminated place looked like a galactic space-city. I was told by the Shet-

landers to avoid this area. This restricted area was the domain of those whose ways were not understood, and where their own kin were lured by the offer of high wages. Many of the men who worked at the oil terminal were from England and Texas. The foreigners with wind-chafed faces had their spirits back in their homelands. They did not want to be in Shetland. The young Shetland workers would probably leave the island as soon as the construction of the terminal was completed; they would search for more oil-related jobs, which paid much more than fishing off the coast or working in the woolen mills.

The man who pulled-up next to me with his Mercedes, gold chains around his neck, and a large gold ring on his little finger, left me cold. His garish appearance contrasted with the modest style of the Shetlanders, clad in wool sweaters and dark-blue snorkel jackets. There was tension among the Shetland people about the foreign workers and the fact that some of their own would be lost to greed, which in turn would mean the loss of some of the traditional ways of island life.

Evening came on. My legs were tired. I was in South Nesting some ten miles southeast of Sullon Voe. Remembering that Shetland had no restrictions regarding trespassing, I climbed over a wire fence, which was used to try to keep the sheep off of the road, and searched for a campsite. I pitched my tent on top of a slight hill. Straight ahead was a view of the North Sea. Behind were more peat hills. I did not go far from A970. I felt more secure with the road in sight. This was the only major traveling route running to the north. I did not want to feel totally isolated from civilization, as I would have if I had traveled over the peat hills. The inside of the tent was spacious enough for me to sit and play the fiddle. I played some traditional Shetland tunes out of a small yellow tune book that was given to me before I left Lerwick. With no wristwatch, I had no idea of the time. It was cold and too dark by now for me to explore the area outside the tent. Sleep seemed to be the only alternative. I climbed into my sleeping bag. My toes were cold, and the ground beneath my tent and sleeping bag was lumpy. So I did not sleep well, tossing and turning most of the night.

How nice it would have been to have company. But there was no one within miles. I did not like feeling cold and lonely. Only twelve miles outside of Lerwick, and I was thinking of going back.

I was up before the sun. The morning was cold. Dew covered my tent. To keep the moisture from seeping through to the

inside, I had to be careful not to touch the sides of the tent as I crawled out. It would take a long time to get warm wearing a wet long-underwear shirt under my sweater. A high peat hill lay in back of my campsite. I decided to take a walk to the top of it and see what was on the other side. I was in no hurry to get back on the road again. And I needed some time to decide whether to continue north or head back to Lerwick. The walk to the top of the hill took only a few minutes. I was surprised to find a fresh water lake below. I had not seen any fresh water on the island before this. Brown clusters of peat hills spread out as far as the eye could see. The sun was rising now. I sat and watched as the bronze moonscape faded. It turned out to be a wonderfully clear day. My soul was filled with reverence. Hares were scurrying around on the hills surrounding the lake. Their white winter coats were easily seen against the brown peat. The sheep were up and wandering about. I began to think of my morning walks down to Lerwick's harbor to see the huge fishing boats that had pulled in to unload the catch. The murmur of the fishermen gutting fish and mending nets blended melodically with the early morning stillness. I began to think about the local musicians I played fiddle with back in the pubs, and how much fun we all had chatting and playing tunes together. I decided to return to Lerwick.

The walk back was a four-hour trek. I was disappointed with myself for not having the enthusiasm to rough it out in the country and make it to the northern-most point in Shetland. I now realized that I needed to be around other people. Without someone to share my experience and thoughts with, the fun of the journey dissipated.

A few miles from town a road worker stopped me and asked where I had just come from.

"Oh, just a camping trip," I replied.

"Pioneer woman, it's lonely and cold out there," he remarked. His words were cheering. Back in Lerwick, the familiar was comforting. It was good to smell the oil and hear the engine noise of the fishing boats down at the harbor. It was about dinner time when I entered the town center, Jim, my friend, the butcher, caught sight of me. He was just leaving his shop. Jim was not the picture of a typical Shetlander. His dark eyes, long kinky black hair and English accent seemed odd amongst the other islanders. They had eyes that were piercing blue-green, they had varying degrees of straight brown hair, and their dialect was rooted in the Old Norse language. Jim had lived in London, for some years and

had never lost the accent. Jim was always in good spirits and loved visitors. He relieved me of my pack.

"You could use some soup. Come up to my house."

These were warming words. Exhausted, I followed. We chatted about my two day excursion over a bowl of tattie soup. With genuine love and respect for his homeland islands, Jim understood my desire to see the countryside. He knew it was easy to feel suffocated during the winter when people spent most of the time inside pubs and houses. He told me that the countryside was much more beautiful during the summer, with the heather in bloom turning the brown hills into magnificent shades of pink. Jim filled me in about the first annual music festival, which would be held in town, in a week, and last four days. He was looking forward to hearing the musicians who would be coming from Sweden, Ireland, England and Scotland.

He knew it would be a wild four days of music, dancing, and drinking. I was glad that I would be in town for the festivities. Later that evening, we went over to the "Lounge" pub around the corner, drank drams of whiskey and played some Irish and Shetland tunes with the musicians. There would be plenty of time to see the countryside when the warmer weather came around, perhaps by bus and with a friend.

— Sandol Astrausky

OMNI-IMPOTENT

Smug Americans in the 80's

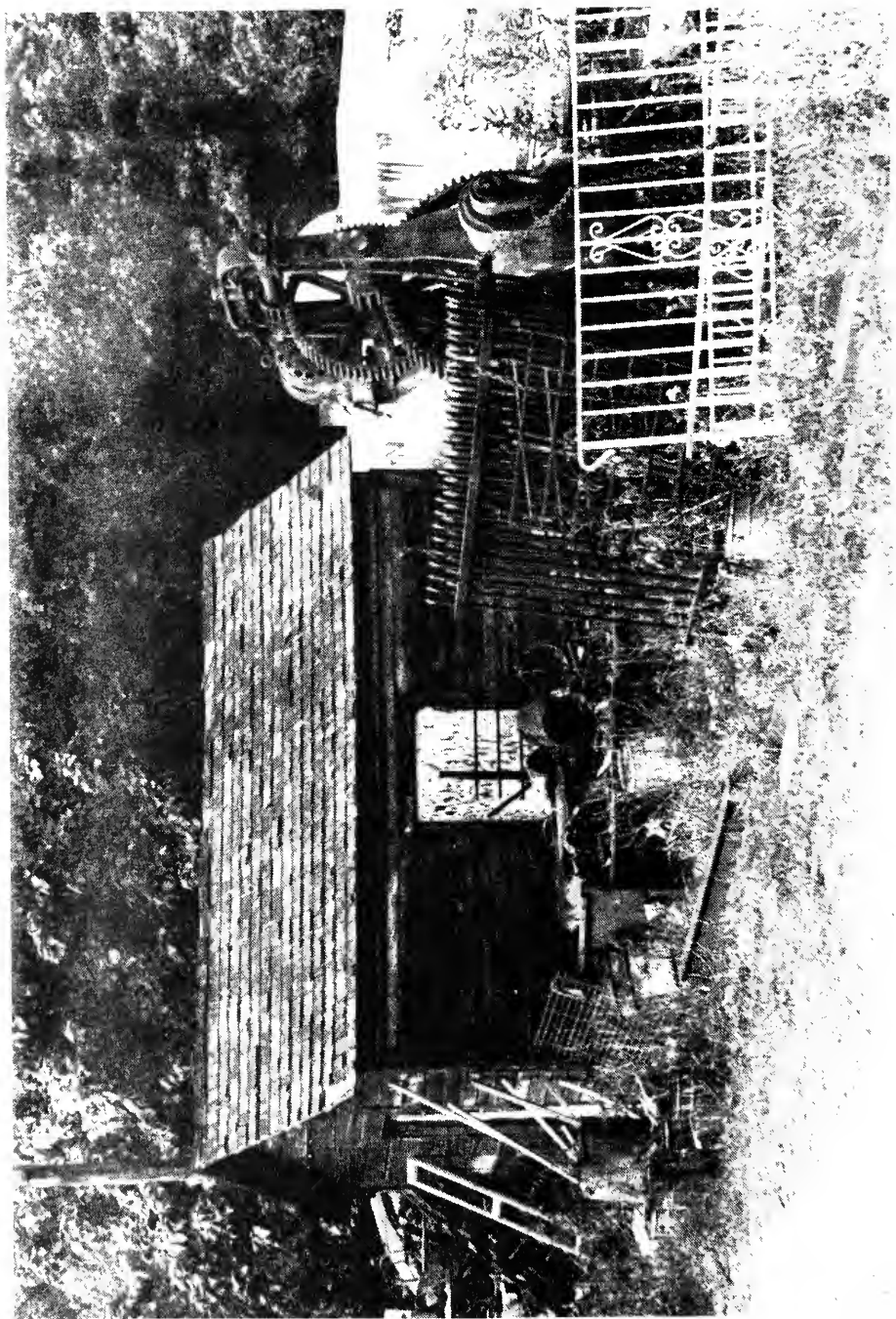
*I do not wish
to run amiss
in my appraisal
of certain kind.*

*But when I see
those not like me,
I just hold them
in contempt of mankind.*

*Sick as I am
I know I just can—
Know all that is
Good, which is mine'd.*

*Even to my End
I will ne'er comprehend
All that were opaque,
ambivalent, and sublime.*

— R. Francis Kimball



— Allan Channels

FOOTSTEPS

*One could go slow,
as Lowell:
nerves mangled
like automobiles
in a hurricane depression.*

*Or quick,
as Keats:
Tossed in a sea
of a Grecian urn,
ashes petrified.*

*Or one could hold,
as Frost:
promises kept
in a forest swept
by shaded dreams.*

*Slow, quick, hold: all
madness the same.
When the dark comes,
it comes too soon
and not soon enough*

*for shadows lost
their way,
found,
at last,
in the maternal night.*

— Michael Hughes

View From the Hill

Abiit, Excessit, Evasit, Erupit, (He is gone, He is off, He has escaped, He has broken free)

—Cicero

*Inside
the red
brick building,
reading "The Trouble
Outside" by Whittemore,
I lean against the window
watching the world below . . .*

*and raise
my fist
as if
to smash
the glass,
to break the air,
to suck in the light of things . . .*

*and yet,
I turn
the page,
and read,
like everyone else
trapped
inside . . .*

— Michael Hughes

The Red Tide

*You begin with God,
but God got killed
on a battlefield
in nineteen-seventeen.*

*So you begin again
with an ancient man,
but you buried the bones
of a modern man.*

*So you begin again
with a european
oriental
oceanic
afro-american man,*

*but you face the grave
of a divided man.*

*So you begin again
with a russian german
super immortal
angelic man ,*

*but you smell the stench
of an animal man*

*awash in the blood of red,
hammered by the horde of red,
slaughtered by the sickle of red,
drowned in the tide of red.*

*So you begin
again and again
knowing under fire
that tsar
and commissar
sound much the same
when you play
the revolutionary game.
So you begin again . . .*

— Michael Hughes

A noiseless patient spider,
I mark'd where on a little promontory it
stood isolated,
Mark'd how to explore the vacant vast
surrounding,
It launch'd forth filament, filament,
filament, out of itself
Ever unreeling them, ever tirelessly
speeding them.
And you O my soul where you stand,
Surrounded, detatched, in measurless
oceans of space,
Ceaselessly musing, venturing, throwing
seeking the spheres to connect them,
Till the bridge you will need be form'd,
till the ductile anchor hold,
Till the gossamer thread you fling
catch somewhere, O my soul.

Walt Whitman